United Nations A/73/130

General Assembly

Distr.: General
10 July 2018

Original: English

Seventy-third session
Item 114 (d) of the preliminary list*
Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of members of the Human Rights Council

Note verbale dated 9 July 2018 from the Permanent Mission of Denmark to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

With reference to the candidature of Denmark to the Human Rights Council for the period 2019–2021 for the elections to be held during the seventy-third session, and in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/251, the Permanent Mission of Denmark to the United Nations has the honour to transmit herewith the voluntary pledges and commitments of Denmark for its candidature to the Council (see annex).

The Permanent Mission of Denmark would be grateful if the present note and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under item 114 (d) of the preliminary list.

* A/73/50.

18-11369 (E) 180718

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Annex to the note verbale dated 9 July 2018 from the Permanent Mission of Denmark to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Candidature of Denmark to the Human Rights Council, 2019–2021

Voluntary pledges and commitments pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/251

1. Denmark is proud to present its candidature to the Human Rights Council for the term 2019–2021. The candidature is guided by the principles of dignity, dialogue and development. If successful, this would be the first time that Denmark would serve as a member of the Council.

2. Denmark is a democratic society based on the rule of law. The protection and promotion of human rights are elements central to our national and foreign policies.

3. Denmark is party to seven core human rights conventions[1] and has a strong tradition of full cooperation with all bodies of the United Nations. Denmark has extended a standing invitation to the special procedures of the Human Rights Council for country visits and has accepted individual complaints procedures in relation to six of the seven conventions.

4. Denmark has long engaged in promoting and protecting human rights. Gender equality and the protection of the human rights of women, including of their sexual and reproductive health and rights, are core values of Denmark. Similarly, Denmark is at the forefront of the fight against torture, as demonstrated by our leadership in that regard in the General Assembly and in the Human Rights Council, as well as our role in the five-State Convention against Torture Initiative. Simultaneously, Denmark is a global front-runner in efforts to advance the protection of the rights of indigenous peoples at the national and international levels.

5. Denmark is committed to assisting States in their capacity-building as a means of meeting their human rights obligations. For forty years, Denmark has achieved the United Nations target of providing at least 0.7 per cent of our gross national income for official development assistance. The primary focus of the development policy of Denmark is on contributing to the fulfilment of the Sustainable Development Goals. We work to ensure that our policies interlink human rights, development, and peace and security.

6. Denmark remains committed to transparency and accountability in government. The independent Danish Parliamentary Ombudsman defends individuals against abuse of executive power. The independent national human rights institution, the Danish Institute for Human Rights, complies with the Paris Principles and has been accredited with A status by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions.

7. Denmark is a strong proponent of an active role for civil society organizations in national and international human rights forums. We maintain a genuine and open

[1] Denmark has ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

dialogue with civil society and non-governmental organizations on human rights protection in Denmark and internationally.

8. In this spirit, Denmark presents the following voluntary pledges and commitments:

Advancing human rights in all relevant international forums

- We pledge to continue our active engagement with all relevant multilateral human rights forums. We will continue to support the successful mainstreaming of human rights across the United Nations system.
- We pledge to address discrimination and promote equal access and opportunities in all spheres of life. We will place a special focus on the full, equal and effective access of women and girls to health care, decision-making, resources, education and opportunities.
- We pledge to maintain an international focus on the prevention of torture, ensuring that no one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.
- We pledge to continue to promote the rights of indigenous peoples, with a view to achieving the ends of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and to enhance the participation of indigenous peoples in decision-making on issues that affect them.
- Efficient and inclusive institutions in rules-based societies form the bedrock of human rights and their implementation and accountability therefor. We pledge to work towards a world in which respect for the rule of law is the foundation of international cooperation and exists in every society.
- We pledge to promote better understanding and implementation of freedom of religion or belief globally, with a special focus on improving the rights and freedoms of women and girls.

Engaging for a credible, operative and effective Human Rights Council

- We pledge to work towards a principled and strong Human Rights Council that takes timely action by addressing critical country situations and important thematic areas of human rights.
- We are committed to bringing more effectiveness into the Council. We pledge to engage in an inclusive, cross-regional and transparent manner to ensure that human rights obligations and universal norms are translated into reality at the local level. This includes strengthening the delivery of capacity-building and technical support.
- Denmark pledges to continue to support universal participation in the Council. We are among the major contributors to the voluntary technical assistance trust fund to support the participation of least developed countries and small island developing States in the work of the Human Rights Council.
- We pledge to continue to promote and protect civil society space at the Council in order to ensure that the views of human rights defenders are heard. We pledge to continue to hold a close and regular dialogue with civil society organizations.
- Denmark reaffirms its continued support for the universal periodic review. We pledge to continue our active engagement with the mechanism.

- We pledge to continue to play an active role in exploring the interrelated and mutually reinforcing nature of human rights and the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Supporting a strong and independent human rights monitoring system

- We pledge to continue to support the work and independence of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). In the past five years, Denmark has quadrupled its voluntary non-earmarked contribution to OHCHR.
- We pledge to continue to support OHCHR in providing technical assistance to Member States in order to support the implementation of human rights obligations, in particular in developing countries, least developed countries and small island developing States
- We pledge to promote the independent human rights treaty body system while reviewing ways of improving its efficiency and effectiveness.

Protecting and promoting human rights at the national level

- Denmark has signed the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, which we pledge to ratify.
- We pledge to continue to engage constructively with national, regional and international human rights monitoring systems with a view to ensuring that we constantly uphold our international obligations and respect for human rights.
- We pledge to uphold the standing invitation to all special procedures of the Human Rights Council and to continue to collaborate fully with the relevant treaty bodies.
- Denmark is committed to an effective and balanced regional system for the promotion of human rights, democracy and the rule of law in Europe. We pledge to continue to comply with and implement the decisions of the European Court of Human Rights in cases brought against us.
- We pledge to continue our efforts towards combating racial discrimination and hate crimes.
- We pledge to strive for an ambitious and more knowledge-based social policy so that disadvantaged children and young people, marginalized adults and people with disabilities can have better opportunities to participate in education and the labour market.
- We pledge to implement our national action plan for the promotion of the security, well-being and equal opportunities of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons.
- We pledge to ensure human rights protection in the asylum system on the basis of a thorough assessment of each case by, among other things, ensuring that rejected asylum seekers have access to a two-tier process.
- We pledge to implement our national action plan on combating trafficking in persons in order to end trafficking and the exploitation of people in the most vulnerable situations.